individual Rural Household Direct Exchange lines (RDELs) in 1685 commercially unviable Short Distance Charging Areas (SDCAs) in the country during the period 01.04.2005 and 31.03.2007.

(c) Out of a total of 2,647 SDCAs in the country, 1,685 SDCAs were identified for providing subsidy support, where the cost of providing RDELs was more than the revenue earned. The mode of subsidy was based on a front loaded payment and equated annual subsidy installments.

Waiting list for cellular connections

1862. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is long waiting list before BSNL for cellular connections;

(b) if so, the details thereof, circle-wise, till date;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this long waiting list is because of lack of handsets with the BSNL; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to resolve this and provide connections to the subscribers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Sir, BSNL has a waiting list of 10,283 Cellular mobile connections as on 31st July, 2007 in North East-II Telecom Circle comprising of Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh States.

(c) No, Sir. The waiting list in North East-II Telecom Circle is due to non-availability of additional equipment capacity.

(d) BSNL has ordered GSM equipment for capacity addition of 80,000 lines in North East-II Circle to wipe out the long waiting list and to provide new connections. An Advance Purchase Order (APO) has already been issued to one of the successful bidder on 18.07.07. Unconditional acceptance of the APO will establish the price to enable issue of APO to other successful bidder. This will enable BSNL to provide more new connections to the subscribers.

Increasing subscriber base of BSNL

1863. SHRI SITARAM YECHURY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TEGHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the details of cellular subscriber base of BSNL *vis-a-vis* the major private operators between June 2004-July 2007;

(b) whether it is a fact that the BSNL subscriber base is dwindling over the period; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor and the corrective measures taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, details of cellular GSM subscriber base of BSNL *vis-a-vis* major private operators between June, 2004 to July, 2007 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) and (c) Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has generally been registering a comparable growth for mobile subscribers as that of private operators in the past. However, there has been decline in growth at present due to GSM equipment capacity constraints and impediment in the procurement efforts for almost six months, as one of the bidder had approached the Hon'ble High Court against the decision of BSNL rejecting his bid. BSNL has already placed an Advance Purchase Order (APO) to one of the successful bidder. It is expected that APO will be accepted soon and enable BSNL to be competitive in the market and regain its market share.

Statement

Operator-wise GSM connections from June 2004 to July 2007

Sl. No.	Operator	As on			
		June 2004	June 2005	June 2006	June 2007
1.	Bharti	7375335	11646068	23072579	44763391
2.	Hutchison Essar	3846572	5594665	10021846	32437084
3.	Idea	2955528	5552347	8535443	17004327
4.	BPL Mobile	2148393	2629251	3267385	1094569
5.	Aircel	1171814	1862044	2713889	7162100
6.	Reliance	881710	1362932	2316771	4347593
7.	Fascel	1022195	1314041	2689159	0
8.	Spice	1302997	1473350	2054627	3290395
9.	Aircel Digital Link	901826	1532081	2863247	0
10.	Hexacom	296788	610216	0	0
11.	Escotel	1089915	0	0	0
12.	Dishnet Wireless	0	0	484928	0
13.	Escorts Telecom	0	0	1632	0
14.	BSNL	5793800	10230029	18297081	28974819
15.	MTNL	416873	1112980	2169661	2668973
	TOTAL:	29203746	44920004	78488248	141743251